

Statement from the Scientific and Technological Community

Ministerial roundtable on the science policy interface

19 February 2013

Delivered by Peter Bates (International Council for Science - ICSU)

At The First Universal Session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, Nairobi, Kenya

- We note with enthusiasm the possibility of a Decision on establishing a subsidiary body on science-policy, for which we would recommend a mixture of both scientists and political members for effective dialogue.
- The subsidiary body could improve communication with scientific community, both for agenda setting at UNEP, and to set priorities for the scientific community. This would aid in identifying both emerging issues and longstanding environmental and social issues.
- We also strongly support the proposal for regular 'State of the Planet' conferences tied to the Governing Council. This is an opportunity to make the UNEP Governing Council a major scientific event, as well as a political event.
- Both the above would need coherent links with UNEPs many science-based programmes, and other science-policy bodies in the UN system (eg IPCC, IPBES), to avoid overlap. An analysis of existing mechanisms may be needed.
- We also would like to draw attention to Future Earth, a new 10 year initiative from the international scientific community, which will coordinate and stimulate research on sustainability challenges and solutions, and link science, policy and stakeholders. The UNEP Chief Scientist is an active partner on this activity.
- Interdisciplinary science (natural and social sciences) is of crucial importance for all of the above science-policy interfaces, to move beyond addressing the environment in a silo.
- Stakeholder participation within these science-policy processes will also be important, and within all aspects of UNEP's work.